

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 09061 271157Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 VO-05 INSE-00 SS-15
SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 DODE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /062 W
-----003798 271159Z /23

O R 271105Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2230
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
USMISSION GENEVA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGKOK 9061

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE REFUGEES ON COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS TO HONG KONG

REF: (A) STATE 75635; (B) HONG KONG 3686

1. REF A ADVISES THAT REFUGEES SHOULD USE AIRLINES
SKIRTING INDOCHINA RATHER THAN THOSE THAT OVERFLY
LAOS AND VIETNAM. LOCAL AIRLINE OFFICIALS HAVE POINTED
OUT TO US THAT AN AIRPLANE IN DISTRESS, WHETHER SKIRTING
OR OVERFLYING AN AREA, REQUESTS PERMISSION TO LAND AT THE
CLOSEST FEASIBLE AIRPORT. FOR EXAMPLE, IF A PLANE DEVELOPED
MECHANICAL TROUBLE OFF CON SON ISLAND, IT WOULD SEEK
TO LAND AT TAN SON NHUT ANYWAY. SINCE THE BANGKOK-
HONG KONG FLYING TIME VIA LAOS AND VIETNAM (THE AMBER
ONE ROUTE) IS APPROXIMATELY TWO HOURS AND THAT SKIRTING
LAOS AND VIETNAM THREE AND A HALF, THE THEORETICAL CHANCES
OF A PLANE DEVELOPING MECHANICAL DIFFICULTY ARE ALMOST
DOUBLE ON THE LONGER ROUTE.

2. SECONDLY, ONLY THREE CARRIERS THAT REGULARLY PLY
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THE BANGKOK-HONG KONG ROUTE DO NOT HAVE PERMISSION TO
USE AMBER ONE. THEY ARE PAN AM, CHINA AIRLINES, AND
KOREAN AIRLINES. THE LAST IS EXPECTED SOON TO RECEIVE
PERMISSION TO OVERFLY VIETNAM BUT NOT LAOS.

3. THIRDLY, IF PAN AM SUCCEEDS IN OBTAINING PERMISSION
TO FLY THE AMBER ONE ROUTE, AND OTHER CARRIERS, SUCH

AS CHINA AIRLINES, DO NOT, THE DEPARTMENTS'S INSTRUCTION
IN REF A WOULD THEORETICALLY FORBID US FROM USING AN
AMERICAN CARRIER.

4. EVEN THE CURRENT REFUGEE FLOW TO THE UNITED STATES
FROM THAILAND EXCEEDS THE CAPACITY OF PAN AM TO HANDLE
ALL REFUGEE TRAFFIC BETWEEN BANGKOK AND HONG KONG, AND
DEMANDS THE USE OF CARRIERS NOW AUTHORIZED THE USE OF
AMBER ONE. EXPECTED INCREASED REFUGEE DEPARTURES IN
ENSUING MONTHS WILL MAKE THE SITUATION EVEN MORE
CRITICAL.

5. RECOMMEND THE DEPARTMENT REVERSE ITS STAND IN
REF A.

WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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